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Praise of Penn.

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*AN*  
**E N A G I S M / A .**

BY

**LOUIS F. BENSON.**

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PHILADELPHIA:  
PRIVATELY PRINTED.  
1881.

FIFTY COPIES PRINTED.

NUMBER 44

COLLINS, PRINTER.

## I. DEDICATION.

THIS simple offering that I may not send  
To whom I would, with love I consecrate,  
And, on her altar laid, I dedicate  
These verses to the memory of my friend.  
Time wrote them on my heart, and I but lend  
A voice to sing them, while beyond my sight  
He somewhere waits till time "The end"  
shall write  
Beneath my verses, and restore my friend.

Time wrote them in the twilight that must be  
In this, our lasting friendship's wayside inn,  
Since God so suddenly put out the light  
That showed the features of his face to me,  
And took His wondering boy away with Him,  
Ere he had time to bid me a Good-night.

10th February, 1881.

## II. MEMORIES.

How sweetly through the silence that is left,  
When voices we have loved are still,  
Comes to the heart a sympathizing guest  
Who can its vacant places fill:

How memory brings the joys of other days  
To calm and soothe the present pain ;  
And walks beside us in deserted ways,  
Whereon our friend comes not again.

And while I sit in the familiar room,  
Before his desk, among his books,  
There falls on me a strangeness and a gloom,  
So sad, so desolate it looks;

So full of purpose utterly undone,  
And pages that are half unfilled;  
Like faded wreaths of victories not won,  
And consummations only willed:

Until some memory, with cunning hand,  
Doth lift the darkness and the pall;  
And thoughts of something he has said or planned  
Make sunny pictures on the wall;

Suggesting that his life has found no end  
Beyond the shadow and the pain;  
And the remembered features of my friend  
Look kindly down and smile again.

The heart is cheered, and gladly contemplates  
The finished work that he has done,  
While faith looks up to him, and patience waits  
To gain the summit he has won.

So, from the broken friendship that has been,  
The paths to that which shall be, slope;  
And the long loneliness that lies between  
Is bridged by memory and hope.

### III. LONELINESS.

I HEARD a plaintive sound among the trees,  
A breath of murmured music, and a throb,  
That, if it had been human, were a sob,  
And died away in sighings on the breeze.  
Then in my heart I said : “Within this wood  
There is a sympathy: kind nature weaves  
About my grief a coronal of leaves,  
And binds it with a song of saddest mood.”

Ah, no! It is the soul alone that grieves,  
And never yet our sorrows wrung a sigh  
From nature, but our fancy woke to find  
We heard but rhythmic rustlings of the leaves,  
That flap and twist and bend unpityingly  
Beneath the pulseless fingers of the wind.

## IV. HOPE.

IT comes again, the second anniversary  
    Of a dark day of pain,  
Yet not a dreaded guest, who brings a curse to me,  
    The season comes again.

It freshens all the happy recollections  
    I cherish of my friend,  
And paints anew, at memory's suggestions,  
    The scenes about the end ;

And how I stood among the broken hearted  
    This day two years ago,  
While the still form from which his soul had  
        parted  
Was laid beneath the snow.

A cold wind swept that hill beside the river,  
Where every tree was bare  
Against the wintry sky, that sent no glimmer  
Nor gleam of sunlight there.

And when were said the words of benediction,  
We were about to part;  
With the new burden of our great affliction  
Pressed close to every heart:—

Then through the clouds, like flowers of heavenly  
blooming,  
The lights of sunset came,  
And on that grave the evening air illumined  
Strewed blossoms bright as flame.

From hill to hill the golden glory brightened,  
And on the stream between;  
Till every heart went comforted and lightened  
From the transfigured scene.

For faith had found the Love that bided tryst  
there;

And still I hear to-night,  
The quivering accents of a broken whisper,  
“Beyond the river—Light.”

Oh, faith sublime! dream of the weary hearted,  
I mount her golden stairs;  
And, with a message from my friend departed,  
Hope meets me unawares.

Glad messenger, come down from the immortal  
With willing feet to me,  
My own were resolute to gain the portal  
Could I but climb with thee.

O vision blest, the pilgrim soul attending;  
And wilt thou lead him home?  
Thou beckonest to me, as thou art ascending,  
To follow thee—I come:

I come, I come; and when my feet are weary,  
    Then whisper, bending o'er,  
That every step is lifting my heart nearer  
    The loved, who climbed before.

## V. THE UNCHANGEABLE.

How beautiful the thought to one who stands  
    Encircled by a tidal-flow of change,  
Whose billows, with a murmur sad and  
    strange,  
Break ceaselessly about him on the sands;  
While chilly-burdened winds encompassing  
    The shore, make monody of days that were,  
With prophecies of all unrest, and stir  
His soul with longing for some steadfast thing:—

How beautiful to him the thought of God,  
Who, farther back than cycle-reach, was  
    Love,  
And shall be, when the cycles die again,  
Still Love, unchangeable: a shore so broad,  
So firm, beyond all tides, all storms above,  
    A rock 'gainst which time-billows dash  
        in vain.





# THE PRAISE OF PENN

1882

BY

LOUIS F. BENSON

COLLINS, PRINTER.

## THE PRAISE OF PENN

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Not with the trumpet blast of martial song,  
The noisy minstrelsy  
And plaudits that to conquerors belong,  
The praise of Penn should be :  
But rather in the simple words men use  
In fellowship and love,  
Or chastened spirits utter, wont to muse  
On things that are above.

I think he won his manhood valiantly  
On faith's old battle-ground ;  
I think that like the garb of royalty  
He wore it, and was crowned.

## THE PRAISE OF PENN

And if on royal brows that crown be best  
    By right divine that cling,  
Surely of sovereigns, the kingliest  
    Was our own Quaker king.

And yet he came not as a conqueror,  
    With fire-brand and sword,  
More mindful to establish on this shore  
    The kingdom of the Lord ;  
To found a commonwealth that he might bless,  
    And wherein war should cease,  
A land whose ways are ways of pleasantness,  
    And all whose paths are peace.

The woods unfurled to the October air,  
    Pennons of gold and flame,  
When, sailing up the river Delaware,  
    The good ship Welcome came ;  
And all who dwelt upon its fertile banks,  
    Dutch, Swedes, and Englishmen,

## THE PRAISE OF PENN

Gave salutation, unto God their thanks,  
And their right hands to Penn.

Two hundred times upon the Delaware,  
The autumn leaves, since then,  
Have drifted seaward ; and the dwellers there  
Who gave their hands to Penn  
Long since are mingled with the leaves. No more  
The Welcome sails the sea,  
Forever harbored by the sheltered shore  
Of the heart's loyalty.

Yet now, two hundred autumns afterward,  
The woods in red and gold,  
And, stately as its founder's dream restored,  
The city he foretold,  
The broad fields stretching outward to the sea  
Along the river-shore,  
Wait at the portals of a century  
To welcome Penn once more.

## THE PRAISE OF PENN

And what of thee? O woodland commonwealth,  
O commonwealth of Penn,  
That art no more a woodland, but a breadth  
Of empire. Standing then  
In woods unbroken to the northern lake,  
Thy forest trees; so all  
Thy sons, as many, stand, who for thy sake  
Like forest trees would fall.

Thou, from thy reverend altitude of years,  
With hand uplifted now,  
Dost bind two woven centuries of praise  
About thy founder's brow:  
While loyal millions, loving him and thee,  
Pledge in their hearts' red wine  
Two names, made one in holy unity  
Forever—his and thine.

Not with the trumpet blast of martial song,  
The noisy minstrelsy

### THE PRAISE OF PENN

And plaudits that to conquerors belong,  
The praise of Penn should be :  
But rather in our watchfulness for thee,  
O queenly State, our prayer  
That civil peace and the soul's liberty  
May dwell immortal there.



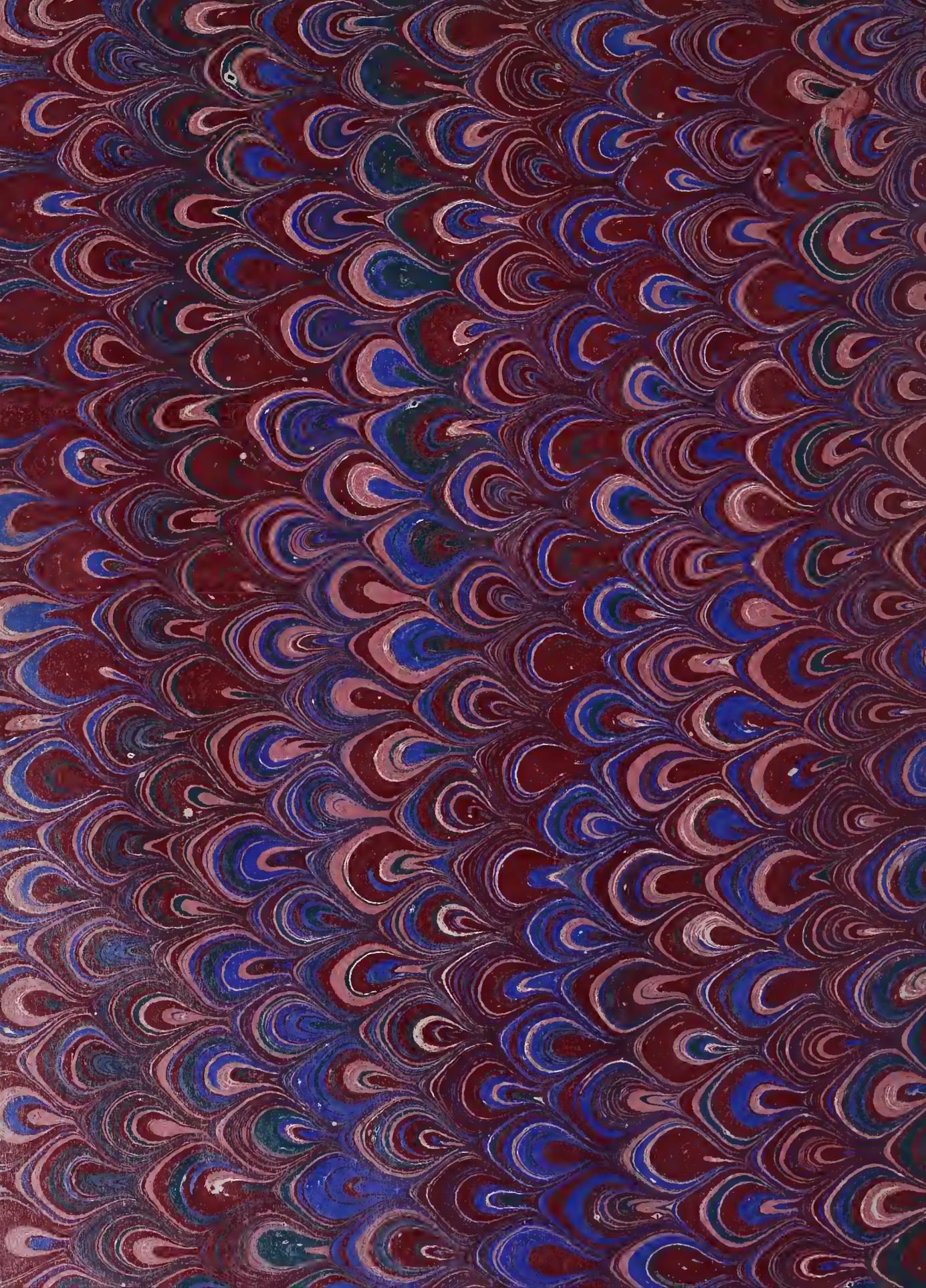
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